

work on this particular piece of legislation that we have a lot more work to do convincing our friends on the other side of the Capitol to act on this.

But what I find interesting is we're just standing here. You're from Kansas; I'm from Ohio. This is not a border State issue where we're directly across the border from Mexico. This is an issue that affects all of us all across the country. So, whether it's manufacturing in my district or, you know, in someone else's district across the country, this is an issue, as you said, that represents America.

We sign a lot of these trade agreements, and many people don't even know what's in the fine print, and here we find out 15 years later about this little program that's going to go on that really, I think, does several things.

One, it's a real threat to U.S. jobs in the trucking industry. And then as your bill pointed out, why it is, I think, such an important piece of legislation, and Mr. Speaker, this is the Safe American Roads Act of 2007, H.R. 1773, sponsored, pushed, advocated for by the gentlelady from Kansas who's been such a strong advocate on this issue. But basically, what we're trying to do from our vantage point is put some responsibility into this thing, to make sure that there are certain standards that are met.

And I know that was the key impetus for this whole piece of legislation from the beginning is let's have some standards, Mr. Speaker, where if you want to compete in the global economy, we're all playing by the same rules.

Now, all of the sudden we have American truckers who have drug testing and there are certain standards for the trucks and certain training that needs to happen and equipment and on and on and on down the line. Now, all of the sudden they're going to be competing with folks who just don't have to abide by the same rules.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. I know a lot of good people are concerned about their jobs.

Our trucking industry, while I'm sure you've heard the same thing as well, as of January I had to put on some pretty strict environmental controls, and they did it. They went out and spent the money. They maintain their trucks. They keep them up to standard, so that when you and I are out there with our families, we don't have to breathe as much smog and we know that trucks that are out there are, in fact, safe.

Those men and women who have purchased those trucks at great expense are now going, What did I do that for? Why is it that I'm required to meet a standard and yet our companions to the south are not, in fact, required to do that? Something is just definitely awry here, and the American people have stood up and said enough is enough.

Let me make this real clear. This is not a partisan issue, Mr. Speaker. We

both happen to represent the heartland, but this is an issue that speaks across not only party lines but across our geographic districts and speaks to people up and down the United States.

What the Safe American Roads Act basically did was say NAFTA provided for a pilot program, but it said there had to be some standards, let's have some standards here, and there had to be a public comment period. Well, we have a grade card here, and I'd like to pull that up for a minute.

Mr. Speaker, here is that grade card. First of all, it said that we had to have a public comment period. Now, traditionally, the minimum comment period is 30 days. Did this get 30 days? No. On June 8, after the Safe American Roads Act was passed, on June 8 there was an announcement that, by the way, all the safety standards had now been met. A simple statement, by the way, they've been met. I compare that to, you know, giving a third-grader 5 hours of homework and 5 minutes later they're running out the door saying, I got it done.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, that's kind of like the President during Katrina; he flies in. He says, Hey, you're doing a great job, Brownie. Well, maybe you should look and see what he did before you start making the comments. So there's a little bit of a pattern that this administration may have.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. I would absolutely agree with that.

So on June 8, the statement was made, yeah, good job, all the safety standards have been met, and the public comment period is starting. That was June 8. It was over on June 28, 20 calendar days, 10 short of what's considered to be the very minimum. You know, it was just a slap in the face of the American people.

Basically, it said that you had to comply with the rules that are already out there. We have section 350 of the FMCA, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Act; you can't bring this new pilot program in until you at least meet those requirements. Well, the fact is that they have not met those requirements either. That has to do with bus inspections. This makes a difference. These aren't just petty little infringements. This is real big business here. Bus inspection facilities still have not been met. Hazardous materials transportation, still we have an F here.

How about keeping the promise of inspecting every truck every time? Well, I think as we noted tomorrow, the Secretary of Transportation is having a press conference with the Secretary of Transportation from Mexico. They're going to be having a press event. Oh, did I say "press event"? I meant they're going to be doing inspections, I'm sorry. They're going to be doing inspections. They're going to inspect one truck from Mexico and one truck from the United States.

Now, I don't know how you feel about that, but I am not convinced that we take a look at one truck and then deem

the whole program safe, and I am deeply concerned again that we are heading in a direction that it's going to be harder and harder and harder to pull back on this thing.

We all know once it's out of the door, once the horse is out of the barn, it's harder and harder to pull this back, and they're just going off in a direction, again that's clearly, clearly opposite the will of the American people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And it makes our roads less safe. I mean, that's why you're here. That's why I'm here. We care about jobs. We care about economic development. We care about all these things, as we'll continue to talk about tonight, Mr. Speaker, but the bottom line is this. We have unsafe trucks that will be coming in that are now through the pilot program, will continue to come into our country, lack inspection, lack the safety standards that we're accustomed to in the United States. That puts those kids who are riding in cars in the other lane, or in front or behind or whatever the case may be, in jeopardy. We have certain standards in the United States.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. So when you first started learning about this, I'm sure you thought the same that I did. Certainly, maybe we're just overreacting, maybe there are standards there, and those standards are being met and we shouldn't worry. Then you come to find out that they don't even have drug testing facilities. They don't even have drug testing facilities in which to perform these. The whole recordkeeping, the hours of service is just extremely worrisome. There's no way to even begin to verify that when someone comes across the border, we don't know how many hours of service that they've had already.

So this is not even an attempt to meaningfully enforce these laws, and they will tell you that, in fact, these systems are not put in place, the same standards that we have, we've come to expect in this country, training, recordkeeping, sleep, drug testing.

And certainly if we're going to talk about drugs, I don't know about in your area, but in mine, we are finally getting the meth labs in the rural parts of my district, we're getting those under control, only to have huge meth shipments coming in from where? From Mexico. And this, again, will just exacerbate that situation and make it harder and harder and harder to control the influx of drugs into this country.

This is not a partisan issue. This is not anything that is being done politically.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Look at the vote on your bill, 411-3.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Don't you wonder who the three were?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I bet I could guess, but I won't comment on that.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. You just have to wonder who said no, and then it went to the Senate, and the Senate basically said we'll take something and